

Joel Roberts Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, January 19, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOEL R. POINSETT TO JACKSON.

private

Charleston, January 19, 1833.

My dear Sir, I have this instant received the accompanying opinion drawn up by the first legal talents of our bar and hasten to transmit to you by express. I think it well digested and suited to our circumstances. it is however very doubtfull whether any course the government can adopt will effectually prevent a conflict in the streets of our city. In my opinion, nothing will prevent that, but the certainty on the part of the Nullifiers that we are prepared to meet them. And I shall be able soon to give them that assurance. I transmit you herewith a statement of the armament 3 lately moved to the Citadel. Five waggon loads of arms and ammunition were sent off into the interiour today, which renders it absolutely necessary I should take some precautions for arming the friends of the union in that quarter. I propose to send arms to given points in N'th Carolina and give orders to our friends to retire upon Spartanburg and Greenville. An order for arms upon the arsenal near Augusta would be important for the protection of our party upon and near the Georgia frontier. A brig arrived from New York yesterday loaded by an agent sent from this state, with arms, among them are 20 heavy guns.

I am forming a Legion in the city independently of the organisation of the Citizens. It is composed of the young and I hope and believe the brave. To complete it I want 4 Six Pounders mounted on travelling carriages. There are many such at Fort Moultrie; but

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Col. Bankhead¹ thinks he will require them in case the Island is attacked or the town to be occupied. I cannot well do without them, 4 are as many as I can manage effectively. I should then have a squadron of Cavalry 80 men, two companies of flying artillery, two companies of Riflemen and a battalion of Infantry, between 6 and 700 in all, and the armed Citizens organised as well as such troops can be, will complete about a thousand to 1200 effective men.

1 James Bankhead, later major-general.

The Nullifiers are extremely active and do keep up the excitement in an extraordinary manner. They drill and exercise their men without intermission. I saw today in the streets of our city several of the Leaders of that party from the Country strutting about with Cockades in their hats—blue with a button, the Palmetto stamped upon it. I hope something will be done for Major Champlin. He is deserving and shall not want; but I do assure you I require all the funds I can raise, which are devoted to the uses of the party. I dislike to touch on this subject; but just now I cannot well manage to transport the means of defence by the circuitous route they must travel without the aid of government. We understand that the Nullifiers have offers of service from some revolutionists in N'th Carolina and especially in Georgia. I send you a Greenville paper, which will show you the spirit of our friends near the mountains and what I have been able to effect there.

very respectfully I am, Dear Sir